

to masses while fighting against their interests, and we waited, as well as you did, for a change which would enable the friends of the people to fight not only for the people but also with the people. Our only possible means to speed this development was, however, to speak to the élite; not as though we had despised the "common man"; but because we had no access to him. Nobody but the Conservatives and the Nazis had an access to him then. The "village explorers" (and I mean the comparatively best amongst them) tried to find a way out of this cul-de-sac by combining their own efforts with those of the fascists. This we refused to do - and I cannot help priding ourselves on being completely justified in our behaviour. The enemy was fascism; our insistence on this separated us from those who would have accepted a land reform even from fascists; and this position made us somewhat apathetic about the whole problem of land reform/at that time.

You generously admit that our fight against fascism and quasi-fascist reaction was as unequivocal as it could be; and yet, you seem to think that we agreed, at least partly, with the Chamberlain-Baladier policy of appeasing fascism. This assumption lacks any foundation whatever. We were the anti-Munichists in Hungary, as much as anybody could be. True, in spite of my opposition to those leading the Western Democracies in that period, I went on referring to them as Democracies and not as "so-called Democracies" - a use of words which you resent. But was I not right in the light of the last few years? If Britain is a Democracy sui generis to-day, it could not have been a nothing-but-sham Democracy at that time; her leadership has fortunately changed but not her machinery of electing the leadership. Neither you nor I want, in this context, to discuss the advantages and shortcomings of parliamentary or bourgeois democracy in general; but once accepting the tenet that, with all its shortcomings, it is still a democracy, we have to apply this denomination to it even at times when its machinery is used to serve anti-democratic purposes. This does not, of course, imply any sympathy with those abusing the democratic machinery.

I agree with you that the doom of Hungarian democratic spirit in the pre-war years was the split between the "village explorers" and us, the "urbans"; I do not see, however, how we could have bridged the gulf without making to fascist ideology such concessions as would have been still more detrimental to the democratic cause than our disunity. Re-reading anything we wrote against the village explorers of those years, I am unable to discover one single word which would to-day be questioned by an anti-fascist. You are wrong in accusing us of ignoring the revolutionary forces which sought their outlet, in a distorted form, through the völkisch confusion of ideas; we several times underlined this sort of importance of "village exploration" - so did I for instance in my essay in our special issue "Mi a Magyar Most?" which, again, does not seem to have reached you. - Nevertheless, I admit that we made plenty of mistakes. But I think these were largely due to things we could not help: mainly the lack of money and of direct contacts with the world outside Hungary. You are right in stating that in spite of our "European" attitude and culture there was a disappointing touch of parochialism in us; I would add that you pay even higher tribute to our knowledge and taste than we deserved. We strived for cosmopolitan outlook, in the best sense, but were far from achieving this; we had no leisure and money and opportunity to travel and study like the gutgesinnt youth brought up in Collegia Hungarica and supported with Government scholarships. And this was, amongst other reasons, responsible for the lack of sense of proportion with which we viewed daily occurrences in and outside our country, failing to record those phenomena abroad which would have been more likely to clear the minds of our muddled semi-intellectual contemporaries than were our somewhat emotionally worded arguments.

Of course, we have not remained unchanged since; many a thing has happened which must have induced every sincere intellect to reconsider some of its ideas. I should like you to make allowances for these facts and to be at our help in finding our place in the intellectual team work of new Hungary. You seem to appreciate the efforts of some of us - Attila József, Zoltán Gáspár, Béla Horvath, myself - but are, I feel, unjustly severe toward